Hist. 80010 Literature of American History I Fall 2017 GC 3308 Thurs. 1145-145pm
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Office hrs (5111.09) Th. 2-3pm 817-8450

This course introduces Ph.D. students to the historiography of the U.S. through the Civil War and is intended to prepare students for the First Written Examination or an outside field in US history.

One of our primary concerns will be periodization. To what extent should the colonial period be considered a prologue to U.S. history? And on the other side of the nationhood divide, are there analyses that suggest a coherence or continuity to U.S. history beyond the particularities of the early republic or Civil War periods? What is the status of the Revolution and the Civil War, and the political history that drives or used to drive the narrative of U.S. history, amid transformations otherwise seen as social, cultural, economic? Are there explanations that that cut across centuries, or stories that hold up in our time? Another important theme of the course is space, within and beyond the places that became the United States during this period and afterwards. Is U.S. history the story of provinces or regions becoming a nation-state? What weight should be given to the local in a moment when historians are reassessing the international or even global nature of early modern as well as modern history? Should “Atlantic” and “Continental” approaches change the narrative? Can empire or empires provide a more compelling and honest as well as capacious history while allowing for the different experiences of different groups in different places?

The books and articles we shall discuss include prizewinning narratives, classics that are still in print after decades, recent monographs born as dissertations, syntheses, and historiographical essays. An important part of what we will be doing is attempting to read these in light of each other. Be forewarned: the reading is extensive, in recognition of the five credits this course carries and its status as a prerequisite for the first qualifying examination. Our goal is to prepare for the exam, of course, but also to prepare to teach this period at the college level and to lay a substantial foundation for future research and teaching in any period of U.S. history.

Instead of a seminar paper or historiographical essay, your written work for the course will consist of weekly (2-3 page) responses to the readings. I will provide prompting questions that will help us work toward the kinds of writing and analysis the faculty will expect for the examination. These informal short essays will be due Thursdays by 930am via email and may serve as jumping off points for our Thursday seminar discussions.

Schedule of readings/discussions
Books with a + are available electronically via the GC library; articles will be posted on Blackboard.

8/31 Introduction

9/7 US Historiography: Consensus and Conflict, Truth and Myth, Capitalism, Slavery, and Freedom
Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men who Made It* (1948), intro & ch. 1-6 (pp. v-163 in original and older paperback editions)
Nancy Isenberg, “Introduction: Fables We Forget By,” White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America (2016), 1-14

9/14 How Historians Revise: Slavery, Race, and Origins in Virginia
Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (1975)

*Tuesday 9/19 Rethinking Beginnings and Perspectives: Continental and Atlantic Worlds
John K. Thornton, A Cultural History of the Atlantic World (2012), Intro, ch. 1, 2, & 6 (pp. 1-99, 159-211).
Andres Resendez, The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America (2014)

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, ch. 1-5, pp. 42-207
Allan Greer, “Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America,” American Historical Review 112 (Apr. 2012), 365-86.

10/5 Mid-Atlantic History (and New York) as Imperial History
+Gail D. MacLeitch, Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire(2011)
Cayton and Anderson, Dominion of War, ch. 1-2
American Colonial History,” *Early American Studies* 1 (Spring 2003), 1-27.

### 10/12 Empire, Understandings, and Misunderstandings in a Long Revolutionary Era
Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms we Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (2009)

### 10/19 The Early Republic as Public: Political Cultures and Cultural Politics
Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy*

### 10/26 The Early Republic at Home: Women and Men
Ulrich, *Age of Homespun*, ch. 6-11

### 11/2 1815-48 -- The Age of Jackson, or is it Adams? Political History and Dueling Synthesis
Edward Pessen, “We are all Jacksonians, We are all Jeffersonians; or, a Pox on Stultifying Periodizations,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 1 (1981), 1-26.
EXAMINE the other for differing arguments

### 11/9 “Antebellum” American Cultures in Motion
+Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship Before the Civil War* (2016)
⇒Recommended: D. Howe, *What God Hath Wrought*, chapters on communications, transportation, culture

### 11/16 Slavery Revisited, Capitalism Revisited, Mobility Revisited
James Oakes, “Capitalism and Slavery and the Civil War,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 89 (2016), 195-220

### 11/23 no class – Thanksgiving
11/30  The Causes and Nature of the Civil War
+Elizabeth Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (2014)
Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (2012)
Scott Hancock, “Crossing Freedom’s Fault Line: The Underground Railroad and Recentering African Americans in Civil War Causality,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (June 2013), 159-92
Yael A. Sternhell “Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), 239-256

12/7  Change and Continuity, Synthesis and Myth-Busting for the Twenty-First Century
Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash*, ch. 1-7,(xiii-173)
Anderson and Cayton, *The Dominion of War*, ch. 5-7
Steven Hahn, *A Nation without Borders*, ch. 1-6

12/12 or 12/14: makeup class if needed, and/or review meeting

12/19  FIRST WRITTEN EXAMINATION

Book List
Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men who Made It*
Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*
Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash*
Andrew Cayton and Fred Anderson, *The Dominion of War*
Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders*
Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*
Andres Resendez, *The Other Slavery*
+Barry Levy, *Town Born*
+Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*
+Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements*
+Serena Zabin, *Dangerous Economies*
Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth*
Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms we Lost*
Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The First Presidential Contest*
Laura Edwards, *The People and their Peace*
+Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism*
+Daniel Walker Howe, *What God Hath Wrought*
+Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, *Colored Travelers*
David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman’s America*
Edward E. Baptist, *The Half has Never Been Told*
+Elizabeth Varon, *Disunion!*
Oakes, *Freedom National*
McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*